

MARCH 2014: HOT WATER BEACH



EASTERN WINNER

In it for Life



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

Date/time: 25th March 2014, 2.30pm
Location: Hot Water Beach
Lifeguards involved: Nimai Vandebos, Emma Smith, Spencer Raymond, Michelle Carter, Gary Hinds, Stacey Semmens, Sandi Lowe

A big day at Hot Water Beach with Examiner-in-Charge Spencer Raymond on March 25 saw Hot Water Beach gain 12 new qualified lifeguards, including Nimai Vandebos who had driven down from Auckland earlier in the day.

At around 2.30pm, most of the new candidates had left expect for Nimai who was planning to go for a surf. Gary Hinds, Sandi Lowe, Spencer Raymond, Michelle Carter, Stacey Semmens and Emma Smith finished putting the equipment away and as Michelle was walking towards her car, she saw a boogie boarder being sucked out, south of the main beach.

With an injured ankle, Michelle ran back to the site and yelled "Rescue, Rescue, Rescue."

Gary immediately issued instructions to Nimai (who had been a lifeguard for 30 minutes) to go with his surfboard and head towards the boogie boarder who had no leash on his board and wasn't wearing fins.

Nimai sprinted across the road, through the car park and down to the beach. He ran along the sand, carrying his board and paddled out to the boogie boarder who was being sucked south and drifting fast about 350 metres off shore.

Sandi and Stacey quickly unlocked the shed and 15 year-old Emma (a lifeguard for six weeks) grabbed a

tube and fins and ran the same route Nimai had just taken. She too hit the water fast and, using the rip to her advantage, swam strongly out towards the boogie boarder.

Nimai reached the patient and was able to reassure him and, with Emma's help, got him to start using his boogie board to head towards shore. Waves were choppy and rough and a 1.5 metre swell was running through.

With Spencer realising that Emma and Nimai were both newly qualified lifeguards, he too hit the water with a rescue tube and fins and swam out to assist and support them.

Challenging conditions and a long swim in was a great test of fitness and endurance for the rescuers. Michelle was at the water's edge and Gary, Stacey and Sandi were positioned at the edge of the car park, ready to offer further assistance if required.

Nimai and Emma brought their patient to shore with Spencer's support. The patient was an international student and was returned to a grateful team of people waiting on the beach after being assessed by Michelle and Spencer.

Gary and Nimai stood chatting for around 15 minutes after the incident and Nimai then attempted to head out again for a surf.

Just as he was about to do this, Gary and Nimai saw a surfer drifting south very fast in almost the same spot as the first patient.

The surfer kept getting on and off her board and was not making any ground. Once again, Nimai quickly paddled out and assisted her out of the rip. He showed her the dangers and advised her to return to shore with him which the patient complied with.

Gary assessed the patient on the beach and she left in a stable condition with some very practical advice on how to spot rips for the future.

A fatality was more than likely prevented that day as both the patients were being swept south and out of the public's view.

